MINUTES AND REPORTS ON EDUCATION.—The Committee of Council on Education have just issued, in a printed form, a mass of valuable documents on the subject of education, comprising minutes of council and reports of inspectors and others, the most voluminous of the latter of which are the reports of Mr. Joseph Fletcher, her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, on day schools throughout England and Wales, under the British and Foreign School Society's system, and on their normal and model schools in the Borough-road. These reports contain an immense mass of condensed tabular and other detail, and together with the accompanying reports, by Mr. John Gordon, her Majesty's Inspector of Schools in Scotland, and various others, appear to be replete with general interest and practical instruction both to teachers, Government, and the public generally. The reality of various already pretty correctly anticipated results, appear to be fully established by these reports, such as that there is the greatest deficiency of schools where they are most [illegible] that there is a necessity for higher education under new circumstances; since there is an augmentation of crime in spite of augmented schooling of the common order; but that there is a slow decline of ignorance under the operation of the better order of schools as even at present constituted. Some of the details on the dark side of the picture of our present state of society are certainly startling—almost incredible, indeed, as facts of the nineteenth century in the heart of England, or even any where else than amongst the less decent order of savages—in illustration of which we may just refer to Mr. Watkins's "Report on Lancashire," vol. i., p. 441. The second volume contains a ground plan of the normal schools in Borough-road, and plans of the internal arrangement of British schools in towns and villages throughout the country. There are also in Mr. Moseley's reports (vol. i.), details of the council's Battersea Training Institution for Masters, and of the cognate institution, St. Mark's College, Chelsea, the enlargement of both of which is strongly recommended to the Committee of Council on Education.

HISTORY OF THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.—SIR: In your review of "The Electric Telegraph," by Peter Progress, in THE BUILDER of the 13th ult., you mention (I suppose from that work), that a Mr. Rowland had "clearly established the fact, that an electric current might be made to pass through a continuous wire of great length." That fact was established about 100 years ago. All the electric telegraphs are merely varied applications of it. The only real inventions are probably the application of it to printing at a distance, and the applying it by one wire to many stations. Heighton's application of the gold-leaf electrometer, instead of the magnetic needle, can scarcely be called an invention; and the one-wired telegraph used at Baden-Baden appears to be that of Brett and Littie, at whose telegraphic exhibition in Furnival's Inn I met him in August. The fact of the transmission of the electric current to great distances, was proved by Dr. Watson and friends on the 14th of July, 1747. They conveyed the shock across the Thames at Westminster on the 14th of August; they conveyed it a circuit of four miles, two of water and two of dry ground; its velocity was so great that no time appeared to elapse during its passage. W. CHAPMAN.

Leicester.

CAMBRIDGE ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—At a general meeting held on the 25th ult., the Rev. G. Williams, M.A., who was in the chair, corrected a statement he had made at the previous meeting, to the effect that the revival of architectural study took its rise in Cambridge, and was subsequently received in Oxford. The real facts of the case were, that the movement appears to have been simultaneous among the members of the sister universities; but the first meeting of the Oxford Architectural Society was held in February, and the first of the Camden Society in May, 1839. Mr. Franks read a paper "On Monuments," communicated by the Rev. C. Boutell, and exhibited a drawing of a decorative pavement in the chancel of Monks' Risborough Church, Bucks, an example of value in the disposition of encaustic tiles. The secretary read some notes on the churches of St. Peter and St. Giles, Cambridge, illustrated with drawings.

PROJECTED WORKS, &c.—Tenders have been called for by advertisement for maintaining the permanent way and works of the Maryport and Carlisle Railway, for three or five years; for pulling down the old county jail at Aylesbury, and assorting and stacking the materials; for executing certain works at the Bedford Lunatic Asylum; and for the erection of a new church at Colnbrook, Bucks.

COMPETITION.—Designs have been advertised for a workhouse for the York Union, to accommodate 300 inmates on the six class system: premium for approved plan 30*l.*, or the usual commission, at the option of the guardians.

YORK WORKHOUSE COMPETITION.—Sir: I have applied for the particulars of this competition, and beg to inclose them for your consideration. To my inquiry, whether or no the guardians will employ the author of what *they* may deem the best design, on his satisfying *them* of his eligibility, I have received a flat evasion. So it is quite clear that the premium (30*l.*) is the entire stakes to contend for. Supposing that there may be thirty competitors, as I blush to say is not improbable, the actual sum offered for *each* design,—plans, elevations, sections, isometrical view, an *exact estimate*, carriage and expenses (worth at least, if anything, 60*l.*),—is exactly *twenty shillings sterling*; more, I take it, than any *bond-fide* architect deserves who shall condescend to compete. It is quite competent for committees to offer such terms, but it rests with *architects alone* to get up competitions on them, and consummate, if they will, their own degradation; and should you, Mr. Editor, think fit to insert this warning in THE BUILDER, let no suicidal competitor complain of the York workhouse competition, whatever may be the decision of the guardians.—I am, Sir, &c., A. B. C. D.

FRENCH POLISHING.—A correspondent complains bitterly of the effect of the Excise laws on this branch of trade, and urges, if exemption could be obtained for it, that it would be used extensively in lieu of paint, being cheaper and incomparably better. He continues,—"but it is not French polishing alone that is suffering from these laws; the cabinet trade, the spirit varnish trade, and, above all, the manufacture of paper-hangings, as the French are enabled to employ designers and use numberless blocks, producing a washable paper that is not to be equalled in this country. Our excise restricts us in every quarter." India rubber is about to be employed as a vehicle for colours, and is said to have advantageous qualities in that respect.

ANCIENT CHURCH DECORATION.—In the process of cleaning St. Peter's Church, Chester, some remains of what is vulgarly called "fresco work" have been discovered. They are on the surface of one of the pillars near the south door, against which is now placed the font, and on which is an ancient niche, that was appropriated probably to a figure of the Saviour, and the holy water. The paintings surrounded the niche. The grooves in the pillar are painted vermilion, and the subjects are faintly described. According to the *Chester Courant*, that on the right of the font is the Annunciation, as the shepherds, sheep, and the angel are in tolerable preservation; on the left is a city, and above an angel, the subject only conjectural. It is proposed to restore them.

EUSTON-SQUARE BATHS AND WASHHOUSES.—A recent report states, that since the opening of the establishment in August, 1846, up to the present period, 131,568 males and 14,377 females have bathed, and that the present average of women and their families, provided with clean linen, by means of their washing, drying, and mangling, and getting up the same, is 4,000 weekly, or nearly 40,000 articles of clothing.

DECORATION OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE.—Tasteful Mr. Fred. Gye has once more been to work, and in an incredibly short space of time has revived the decoration of Drury-lane Theatre, fitted up the pit, introduced a proscenium, and decorated all the lobbies and approaches. The new curtain, white and blue drapery, with a central medallion, is beautiful.

MR. JOSEPH KAY, a respected member of the architectural profession, died at his house in Gower-street, Bedford-square, on the 7th inst., at the advanced age of seventy-two. Mr. Kay held the appointments of architect to Greenwich Hospital and the Foundling Hospital.

PLAIN ENOUGH, ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT TO EVEN A PLAIN UNDERSTANDING.—Mr. Haywood, one of the sanitary reporters on the state of Sheffield, narrates a case which may give some idea to what extent noxious matters, such as the draining of a privy into a dwelling, are regarded by many of the humbler classes.—"Do you not perceive an unpleasant smell from that place behind your house?"—"No, nowt as I know on."—"What! does not that wet which runs down your wall smell bad sometimes?"—"Sometimes: It does a bit, of a mornin', but *nowt to mean aught*."—"Have you lived here long?"—"About sixteen years."—"Pretty good health since you came?"—"Pretty middling, considering."—"What family have you had?"—"O've had fourteen childer."—"Have they had pretty good health as well as yourself?"—"Nay, *o've buried 'em all but three*."—"Were they all born in this house?"—"No, four were born in Derbyshire—*three of these are still living, but the youngest on 'em died here!*"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*Inquirer*."—We have no information as to the Worcester Asylum competition.

"*Inquirer*."—There are no fixed rules.

"*E. H.*"—We know of no other Asphalte Company.

"*Patentee*" "*Almshouses*" *Competition*."—We will give particulars next week.

"*P. P. P.*"—The referee gives certificates of qualification at fixed periods, advertised in THE BUILDER.

"*J. H. R.*"—We might deceive by replying: the shape, size, and position of the ground must be considered. Get professional assistance.

"*Elector*."—Look to the Act of Parliament.

Received.—"C. E." "J. W." (next week). "Amateur" (shall appear). "G. R." "J. C." "C. B." (not in our province). "M. N." "A Subscriber." "H. C." "J. A." "M. and K." "Mr. T." (Parliament-street). Thanks. "D." (Bath). "The Tradesman's Book of Ornamental Designs." Part 7. Orr, Paternoster-row. "Tait's Magazine."

"*J. L.*" (Lille).—Thanks for the sketches: we shall make some use of them. Our old friend shall hear from us soon.

"*Books, Prices, and Addresses*."—We have not time to point out books or find addresses.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

HEALTH OF TOWNS.

KIRRAGE'S PATENT SEWER-DRAIN AND BUILDING BLOCK.—The Patentee, observing the evils which arise from the perishable nature of the materials in general use for building Sewers, Foundations, and other Works, much exposed to the action of water, was induced to attempt the production of a material which should at the same time be impervious to and indestructible by damp, and unaffected by atmospheric influences, and combine great strength and durability with facility of moulding into any required shape. In this he has been successful; and he is now enabled to offer to the Public his Patent Blocks, which will be found to possess all the qualities of great strength, indestructibility by water, facility of working, and great cheapness, and be invaluable for all subaqueous and subterranean structures, more especially for forming the bottom of Sewers, which at present, from the nature of the materials used in building them, not only permits very considerable leakage, but constantly require repair. The use of the Patentee's material is not confined to the purposes above mentioned, but may be applied for all building purposes, especially Foundations of Barns, Granaries, Malthouses, and other places where there is a tendency to damp; and dryness is essential, as also for the formation of Baths, Cisterns, and Reservoirs.

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Contractors, Engineers, Surveyors, Builders and Public Companies carrying on Public Works, are invited to inspect the Patent Sewer and Drainage Blocks; Drawings and Specifications of which can be seen at the offices of Messrs. DREW and SHADWELL, 23, Abingdon-street, Westminster, where also all applications for Licenses are requested to be made.

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